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SUBJECT: NEW GERMAN AF/PAK REP: POLITICIAN OR DIPLOMAT?

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR GEORGE GLASS. REASONS: 1.4  
(B) AND (D).

11. (C) SUMMARY. MFA Afghanistan/Pakistan Task Force Director Ruediger Koenig told us November 9 that a decision would be taken by the new center-right government "relatively soon" on a German AF/PAK special representative. The coalition agreement between the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and Free Democratic Party (FDP) provides for the federal government to appoint a "special envoy" for AF/PAK, based on a nomination from the MFA and in consultation with all the other ministries concerned with the German engagement in Afghanistan (i.e., Chancellery, MOD, MOI and Development). The envoy will report to the ministers, who will form a special committee on Afghanistan. Up until now, this coordination committee was conducted only at State Secretary level. Meanwhile, the AF/PAK special rep appointed by former FM Steinmeier remains on the job. END SUMMARY.

REPRESENTATIVE OF WHOLE GOVERNMENT

12. (C) With the support and backing of all the relevant ministries, the new special rep should be able to speak authoritatively for the whole government, unlike the current incumbent, Ambassador Bernd Muetzelburg, who was appointed by former FM Steinmeier without prior consultation with other ministries. The down side is that it could take a while for all the ministries involved to agree on a candidate.

MUETZELBURG REMAINS IN THE INTERIM

13. (C) Meanwhile, Muetzelburg remains in the position and is continuing to work. In fact, he is scheduled to travel to Afghanistan on November 18. Koenig noted that there was no particular urgency to appoint a replacement because Muetzelburg's contract does not expire until the end of the year. It is unlikely that Muetzelburg's contract will be renewed since he is so closely identified with the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which is now in opposition. A professional diplomat, Muetzelburg served as foreign policy advisor under former Chancellor Schroeder.

PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMAT SEEN AS MOST LIKELY

14. (C) There has been speculation about whether FM Westerwelle could go outside of the MFA and tap either a current or former parliamentarian to be the next special rep, which might give the position additional political heft. One name frequently mentioned in this connection is Elke Hoff, a parliamentarian from Westerwelle's own FDP. While Hoff is a relatively junior Bundestag member, she travels regularly to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran and probably knows the region as well as any German politician.

15. (C) However, most contacts doubt whether a sitting

parliamentarian would be up to the travel schedule required for this job. It would be very limiting if the special rep could only travel when the Bundestag was not in session. A former or retired politician would presumably not have those limitations. But while declining to give the names of any potential candidates, Koenig still thought the most likely outcome was the appointment of a professional diplomat. He noted that unlike in the United States, Germany did not have a tradition of filling ambassadorial positions with non-professional diplomats.

16. (U) Post will continue to follow this matter closely and will immediately report any new developments septel.  
MURPHY